

SNOWMOBILE ADVISORY WORKGROUP

MINUTES

**June 19, 2018
10:00 a.m.
Conference Call**

Committee Members Present

Bill Manson, Vice Chairman
Don Britton
Jim Duke
Cindy Hammers
Joe Kuchnicki

DNR Staff Present

Paul Yauk
Ron Yesney
Jessica Holley
Michel Desnoyer
Nicole Toman
Paul Gaberdiel
Scott Slavin
Matt Torreano
Monica Weis
John Morey

Public Attendees

Mike Bader
Dave Campo
Carl Davenport
David Dube
John Houk
Jim Kelts
Tim Maskus – Luce County Sheriff Department
Karen Middendorp
Mark Pankner

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of the amended March 1, 2018 Meeting Minutes motioned by **Mr. Kuchnicki** and seconded by **Mr. Britton**.

Approval of the amended June 19, 2018 Meeting Agenda motioned by **Ms. Hammers** and seconded by **Mr. Britton**.

Equipment Subcommittee Report

Mr. Britton informed the group of the mid-May meeting with Richard Kennedy and the Subcommittee's discussion of approving six new groomers, moving the Lewiston groomer to the Upper Peninsula, and the possibility of selling the Sur-Track unit. **Ms. Hammers** will spearhead the outcome of the Sur-Track unit. **Mr. Kuchnicki** is pleased with the cost savings of upgrading equipment but has some quality concerns. **Ms. Holley** brought the equipment in the 'Thumb' area to the Committee. In the past, the SAC in the 'Thumb' area made a recommendation to keep equipment in the area. **Ms. Holley** will collect data and come up with scenarios and present the findings to the Committee for input.

LEAN Process Action Team Briefing

Mr. Yesney spoke about the marketing team promotions from last season. The 'Where your permit dollars go' and loud pipes education was very successful. A video of rides, groomers, interviews with LED, clubs, and staff will be out this fall. **Mr. Yesney** also discussed off-trail, trespass, and loss of trail issues. He sent signage information from the previous LEAN meeting with bullets of preferred language. 'Stay on Trail' is not effective and does not connote why people should ride on the trail. Respond to **Mr. Yesney** with the bullet language that we could make into a sign.

Mr. Yesney also brought to the Committee for discussion off-trail, trespass, and loss of trail issues. 'Stay on Trail' is not effective and does not connote why people should ride on the trail. Respond to **Mr. Yesney** with the bullet language that we could make into a sign.

Ms. Holley said that they are working with county grant recipients and DNR-LED. The handbook will have the dates changed and be republished and will be updated annually. The recommendation from the Team for improving grants and paperwork is moving forward. RFP is out for bid. The bids will be considered and reviewed by the DNR procurement staff. They will be able to better track paperwork, have up-to-date mapping, and keep track of drivers.

Lower Peninsula Contractors for Permanent Easements

Mr. Yauk said they are making progress in the Upper Peninsula. Greg Kinser will get the assignment to work on the **lower peninsula contractors for permanent easements**. He will get with **Mr. Yesney** and his staff to come up to speed on the process and get started.

Event Use Permit Update

Ms. Toman discussed the permits on state lands. The organizer needs to contact the land manager with the event/use information. It will then be decided if a permit is needed. For the most part, if it is a structured organized event with 20 people or a fee is charged, a permit will be required. If the use is not outside the normal activity of the resource with minimal impact and no participation fee is charged the event may not require a permit. The only recent change to the permitting process is the fee aspect in relation to the impact to the resources. An organizer can get a rider on their insurance or if it is an event tied with a club, the club can add the rider to their policy.

Snowmobile Sales Report

Mr. Manson said there were an additional 10,500 permits sold last year. When the MSA is finished reconciling their permits with the DNR, the permits sold this season could be about 500 off either way.

Carmuse Update

Mr. Campo informed the Committee of the letter he received from the Mayor of Rogers City. In the letter was a detailed timeline. The dates of interest were February 2018 when all the required information was gathered and submitted to Lansing for a recommendation on a land transaction. In April 2018 a land exchange was being sought to move forward with the land transaction. There will be a survey done to get the property legal. Now is the time to put together a plan for the summer meeting with the stakeholders, DNR, and community regarding the 11-mile stretch of trail.

LED Report

Mr. Morey had no new updates.

Fatality Summary Report

Mr. Morey discussed the snowmobile fatality report and said there were no updates on the pending incidents. There have been many inquiries regarding the incident with the DNR groomer; nothing has been formalized. Everything is current on the website. The process to posting information on the website is getting information from field staff, investigation, report to supervisor, reviewed report to Lansing, and then to **Mr. Morey** for posting. There are approximately 20 pending incidents for this year. We do need a better process to get timely and accurate information for the updates.

'Ride Right' Campaign from Luce County

Mr. Yesney reported that the focus from the LEAN Marketing Outreach Team is to renew a safety message. **Mr. Maskus**, who helped create a 'Ride Right' safety campaign in Luce County, gave background on the campaign. The four components are: Ride on the right side of the trail; Ride sober – alcohol and drug free; Ride safe and expect the unexpected; and Ride right for your family and friends. **Mr. Morey** said the number two reason for emergency room visits are ORV/snowmobile related accidents. LED has put up posters displaying ORV/snowmobile accident damage. We should get together with Luce County and the Committee and work together to get a message out state-wide. **Mr. Manson** suggested getting some ideas, a budget, and work up a plan to get this message out to riders.

Ms. Hammers made a motion to work with MOD on a 'Ride Right' campaign. **Mr. Kuchnicki** seconded.

Both **Ms. Hammers** and **Mr. Kuchnicki** will represent the Committee and work with **Mr. Yesney** and **Mr. Maskus** in developing ideas for next season.

Safety Concerns Regarding Summer Work

Mr. Mason was asked about placing a safety sign while people work on signing and brushing trails. A 'Men at Work' type of cautionary sign could be placed within a reasonable distance near the workers and moved along as they work their way down the trail.

Free Snowmobile Weekend Discussion

Mr. Yauk said that for the process to start they would need a proposal from the Committee. **Mr. Manson** would like to make a recommendation to work with LED and MSA officers to decide which weekend/s would be best. **Mr. Morey** said the long or busy weekend would have no additional impact to LED. **Ms. Holley** suggested that if they were to have the ride during safety week, they could piggyback on their efforts to ride Michigan free and safe this weekend. It was said if they did a free ride in January, it may entice some riders to purchase their trail permits.

DNR Staff Reports

Ms. Holley said the hot topic at the Snowmobile Congress administrative meetings was mixed use on trails with side-by-sides and machines with greater widths where they cross or use the trails. Comments were both positive and negative. They need to discuss with clubs and users to find common ground on issues.

Mr. Torreano gave an update on the permanent easements in the Upper Peninsula. Big Bay has five parcels with easements that have been signed. The Drummond Island easements, which were provided by **Ms. Hammers**, have paperwork in place and surveying is complete. They were contacted, due to word of mouth, for an easement east of Lake Linden to the Gay trail. The underpass beneath US 41 in Marquette will have permanent access through Marquette County property. Three private landowners are amenable to granting permanent easements. Trail 8 – completed title analysis and research; there are some breaks in ownership. The contractor is not yet on board to work on this project.

Mr. Yesney said that acquiring easements with corporate landowners is more complicated than anticipated. They are meeting with a contractor and Weyerhaeuser for a 13.5-mile section in Ontonagon, but it is proving to be complicated.

Mr. Slavin said PRD is working with LED, FRD, and Consumers on the trespass issues on Trails 76 and 55. Trail 651 is a dual-use trail with exposed culverts. A request for trust fund monies is in for the Manistee Bridge. The White Pine trail is affected by a closure and a failing culvert. A 12-mile portion from LeRoy to Reed City will be paved and hopefully the culvert will be fixed at the same time.

Mr. Yauk discussed the trail damage in the Keweenaw. Public safety and opening culverts are the two main priorities. PRD and FRD are signing and fencing off closed trails. They are bringing staff from downstate to assist in the efforts to move equipment and to inventory the trails. **Mr. Yesney** reported that there are about 50 major washouts in the area. It will take time and money to open the trail between Hancock, Lake Linden, and Calumet. The Bill Nicholls trail has two or three washouts and they can work on getting the trail ready by winter.

Mr. Gaberdiel reported that he is readying cost-share projects for next year. He would like to move trust fund projects this year, but it is uncertain if they can be accomplished. Hancock is amenable to 10-year agreements for the snowmobile/ORV re-routes in Alger County. The road commission and Park Service are both on board as well. The Doty Bridge project is funded, and they are waiting to hear from DTMB. Engineering is complete on the project.

International Snowmobile Congress, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Mr. Mason will report at the next meeting.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Ms. Deb Fergus made a request prior to the meeting and was not in attendance.

Mr. Campo said timely reports are a two-way street. He submitted a final reimbursement April 16th and received an email May 24th regarding the reimbursement which was signed on May 15th.

Mr. Yesney said that was an issue with the unit contact. If that keeps occurring, elevate the issue.

Mr. Kelts asked if he could use the LEAN Team marketing video at the Novi show. This brought up a discussion on how else the DNR video could be utilized at other outreach events.

Closing Comments

Ms. Holley mentioned the SAW Committee and MTAC vacancies. The MTAC position is appointed by the Governor's office and there are a few recommendations. **Mr. Yauk** added that the SAW Committee position is appointed by the MTAC chair and he will work with **Mr. Manson** and **Ms. Holley** for a recommendation from the DNR.

Mr. Kuchnicki asked if there were a sunset on finished sleds – there is not one, yet.

Mr. Britton thanked the members of the Equipment Subcommittee for all their work.

Mr. Duke made a motion to adjourn the meeting and **Mr. Britton** seconded. Meeting adjourned at 12:01 pm.